Hannah Neville

Ms. Krafft

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In the novel *The House of Mirth*, we are presented with constant conflicts of what is morally correct and ethically wrong for the ideals of women in the early 1900’s. Women are expected to run households and take on the duties of raising children. Men are expected to be the providers of the house, and have the ability to support their families. Women are to be consistent in their appearance, and are expected to be rather conservative when it comes to public displays of affection. For a woman to be seen with a married man is a big deal, especially if that woman is not their spouse. Gossip is easily spread, and rumors are taken way out of hand. Ms. Lily Bart is quite a character that is not entirely sure of what she wants in life, and is faced with nearly impossible obstacles to overcome. Lily is torn between the luxury and comfort of living the wealthy lifestyle of the upper class and finding true love and happiness. Though Lily is an animated character who is rather attractive, a lot of men look at her the same. Lily has a lot of friends and rumors following her not so positive reputation. The struggles of Lily helped shape the individual that she is now.

In the beginning of book two, Lily is faced with multiple problems. Lily wants to climb the social ladder and obtain all the riches and wealth that she can, but does not fully portray this by just going out to marry a wealthy man. For example, Mr. Rosedale proposes to Lily, and Lily kindly asks for time to think about the decision, for she is not really attracted to Mr. Rosedale as an individual. She is torn between marrying Lawrence Selden with whom she sees as compatible, but does not hold the desired funds of living lavishly, or marrying Mr. Rosedale, who has the money but not the companionship Lily seeks. With her accumulating debut to Mr. Trenor, Lily is running out of options and places to go where she is still accepted after being accused of having an affair with George Dorset, in which Mrs. Bertha Dorset lied about in order to cover up her own affair with Ned Silverton. “We all know that’s what Bertha brought her aboard for. When Bertha wants to have a good time she has to provide occupation for George. At first I though Lily was going to play her cards well this time, but there are rumors that Bertha is jealous od her success here at Cannes, and I shouldn’t be surprised if there were a break any day. The Silverton affair is in the acute stage: it’s necessary that George’s attention should be continuously distracted.” (Wharton, 304). Mrs. Bertha Dorset is pursing an affair with Ned Silverton, and uses Lily as a distraction for her husband, George Dorset. Bertha doesn’t really like Lily, but using her as a shield to cover up her adultery seemed like a good idea at the time, that is, until, she saw George actually become attached to Lily’s presence and wanted her off of the yacht. Poor Lily has been dealt some evil cards and is caught in a rather unpleasant situation. She was not really pursing any type of affair with Mr. Dorset, but because the two were constantly spending time together, rumors were spread by Bertha in order to ruin Lily’s social status. Lily has tried her hardest to separate herself from the drama that comes with being an everyday civilian in a pressured society based off of your wealth and social status.

Suddenly, when the realization hits Lily that she is to leave the yacht, she came to the epiphany that she was completely and utterly alone with nowhere to go and very limited funds. “To leave -? What do you mean? What has happened?” “Nothing, but if anything should, why be in the way of it?”… “Nothing will, I am sure; but while there’s even a doubt left, how can you think I would leave Bertha?” (Wharton, 345)

Once Lily leaves the Yacht, she bounces around between places for a bit when she ends up with Gerty Farish. Lily finds out that she is to inherit some money from Mrs. Peniston who passed away, but is “snubbed.”

“Disinherited - she had been disinherited – and for Grace Stepney!” (Wharton, 359)

Gerty realizes that this was extremely unjust for Lily to have to face, for she only received ten thousand dollars of inheritance. Gerty tries to console Lily, who is just happy that she has money to now pay her dues to Mr. Trenor.

“Oh Lily, its unjust; it’s cruel – Grace Stepney must feel she has no right to all that money!” (Wharton, 360)

All in all, *The House of Mirth* takes us on a twisted adventure through events of Ms. Lily Bart’s life. We watch her character grow through the daily hardships of living by herself and in constant debut to those around her. Lily doesn’t really have a lot of support around her due to her constant inconsistent decisions. For example, taking checks from Mr. Trenor and using them for gambling purposes. Lily’s friends don’t see her as highly either, especially with the rumors with her and Selden, as well as the rumors with her and Mr. Dorset. With a ruined social status, Lily cannot continue to live the life that she once was before. At this point, we are unsure of how Lily will continue her journey through life, but we know one thing is for sure, she is quite indecisive of how she will end up or get there, and knows how to keep the story interesting for the readers.